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Thornwell Centennial Addresses

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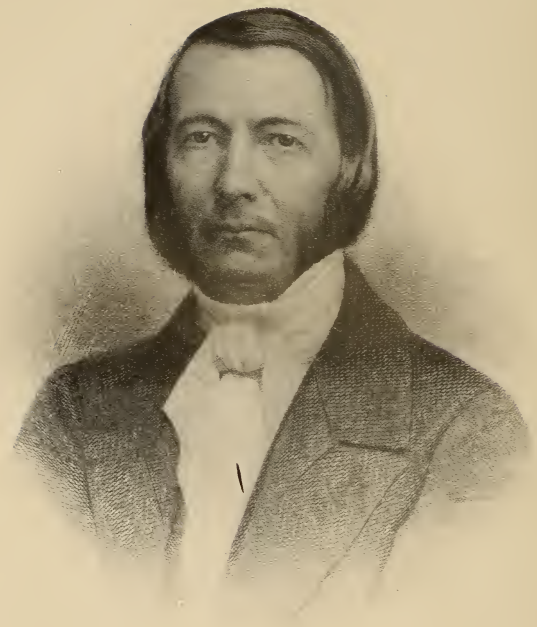

J. H. Morrill

CENTENNIAL ADDRESSES

Presbyterian church in the U.S

Delivered Before the Synod of South Carolina
in the First Presbyterian Church, Columbia
October 23, 24, 1912

COMMEMORATING THE BIRTH
OF THE
REVEREND JAMES HENLEY THORNWELL, D. D., LL.D

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE SYNOD

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PREFACE

The Reverend James Henley Thornwell, D. D., LL. D., was born near Cheraw, S. C., December 9, 1812, and was reared in the same section of this State. Left in poverty and obscurity by the death of his father while yet a child, he was taken up in early life and educated by General James Gillespie and Mr. William H. Robbins; and at their expense, together with that of General Samuel W. Gillespie, he was sent through South Carolina College, where he was graduated in 1831, with the first honors of his class.

While teaching in Sumterville in 1832 he made profession of faith in Christ, uniting with Concord Church, and immediately began to prepare for the ministry, to which he was ordained by Bethel Presbytery in 1834. His subsequent life, extending to August 1, 1862, was spent entirely in connection with the Synod of South Carolina, in which he rendered most valuable and distinguished service to the Church and the State.

It therefore seemed meet to the Synod to make appropriate celebration of his illustrious career and eminent services near the Centennial of his birth, and accordingly at its sessions in Newberry, October, 1910, it adopted the following resolution:

The 9th of December, 1912, will be the centennial of the birth of the Rev. James H. Thornwell, D. D., LL. D., a son of this Synod, who spent his whole ministerial life in our bounds, and who rendered most eminent service to our Church in defining her theological views, and in expounding, organizing, and applying her ecclesiastical polity. Therefore,

Resolved, That the Synod during its sessions in 1912 make appropriate celebration of this noteworthy centennial; and that a committee of three be now appointed by the Moderator to make the necessary arrangements for this celebration, and report to the next meeting of Synod.

The Moderator appointed the following as the committee, Rev. Drs. T. H. Law, and E. P. Davis, and Elder H. E. Ravenel, who reported to the next Synod, recommending that the meeting for 1912 be held in the First Church, Columbia, which Dr. Thornwell had twice served as pastor, and in the city where nearly all his eminent services to the Church had been rendered; and that three set addresses be delivered during this meeting, on

several specified phases of Dr. Thornwell's life and work, by speakers named. This report was adopted; and during the sessions of the Synod in the First Church, Columbia, October 23d and 24th, 1912, the addresses were delivered as appointed, in the presence of large congregations assembled with the Synod to hear them. And with reference to them, the Synod adopted the following:

Resolved, That we have heard with genuine profit and pleasure the eloquent and learned address delivered by Rev. Thornton Whaling, D. D., on "Dr. Thornwell as a Theologian;" by Rev. A. M. Fraser, D. D., on "Dr. Thornwell as an Ecclesiologist;" and by Rev. Thomas H. Law, D. D., on "Dr. Thornwell as a Preacher and a Teacher," all of which addresses were delivered as part of the celebration of the Centennial of the birth of the Rev. James H. Thornwell, D. D., LL. D.; and the Synod now desires to put on record its appreciation of these valuable contributions to the life and memory of our distinguished divine.

Resolved, further, That the Stated Clerk of Synod, with W. A. Clark, of Columbia, and John McSween, of Timmonsville, be appointed a committee and authorized to procure from the speakers copies of these addresses, and, with the consent of the speakers, have the same printed for distribution among the members of Synod; and be authorized to meet the expenses thereof out of any funds in the hands of the Treasurer not otherwise appropriated.

In compliance with these resolutions, this little volume is now sent forth.

Spartanburg, S. C., December 31, 1912.

CENTENNIAL ADDRESSES

I.

Dr. Thornwell As a Preacher and a Teacher

REV. THOMAS. H. LAW, D. D., SPARTANBURG, S. C.

I confess to sincere hesitancy and genuine misgiving in allowing myself, by the action of the other members of the committee appointed to arrange for this centennial, to be put upon its program. In my own opinion, others could have done the service better. But to discourse upon Dr. Thornwell as a Preacher and a Teacher, it seemed important to have one who knew him as such by personal experience. And so great have been the ravages of death during the fifty years since his departure, that very few now remain of the many who sat under his ministry as a Preacher, and at his feet as a Teacher. But, having enjoyed this rare privilege during my whole Seminary course, circumstances appeared to make it proper that I should undertake the task assigned.

And so, what I shall say on this occasion will be largely reminiscent. Although a half-century, full of exciting events in our history and of absorbing work on my own part, has elapsed since my illustrious friend and preceptor was called from distinguished and most useful service on earth to the higher and more blessed service of Heaven, I still retain a very distinct impression and vivid recollection of him, both in the pulpit and in the professor's chair. And I have refreshed my memory in this respect and gathered further authentic information, by re-reading—and I must say, with the most intense pleasure and profit—"Thornwell's Life and Letters," by his friend and co-laborer, Dr. B. M. Palmer, who, I am told, regarded this book as his best contribution to the press.

Dr. Thornwell's public service to the Church and his generation alternated between that of preaching and teaching, and for the most part combined the two functions. It seems appropriate, therefore, that he should be considered in these two kindred aspects of his life and service together. But, to treat the subject more clearly, let us distinguish, and consider first

DR. THORNWELL AS A PREACHER.

In a very remarkable way the Lord indicated His predestination of young Thornwell to the gospel ministry. So far as we have any record, he was not born and reared in circumstances which pointed in this direction. His father, whose occupation was that of an overseer of slaves on the plantation of another, died when James was nine years of age, and left his widowed mother with several small children to care for and rear, in a condition of poverty and straitness which afforded her little opportunity to provide for their due education and training. That she was a woman of positive religous character, who impressed upon her son's youthful mind the truths of Christianity, he himself gratefully testifies. But, on account of his aptness to learn and his manifest brilliancy of intellect, at an early age he was taken from his home to be educated through the generosity of kind and noble gentlemen. And, as far as we can gather, neither of these in any way sought to direct his attention to the ministry. Mr. W. H. Robbins, who had taken the bright lad to his own home in Cheraw to educate him, was not at that time a professing Christian; and both he and Gen. James Gillespie, the other patron, had thought and spoken of the profession of the law, which Mr. Robbins himself followed, as affording the proper sphere for the development and exercise of the talents of their little, pale-faced protegé. But when young Thornwell, dwelling in the home of his bachelor patron and enjoying the advantages of his society and his library, as well as of the village school, was yet a youth of sixteen, he heard incidentally from his patrons their idea that he should become a lawyer. And so overwhelming was his conviction at that time, though not then himself a professing Christian, that he must prepare for the gospel ministry, even though it involved, as he apprehended, the sundering of the affectionate and delightful relations with his noble patrons and his loss of their needed help in his education, he felt constrained to inform Mr. Robbins; and, unable to talk to him face to face about the matter, he wrote a manly, courageous letter, unfolding his views and convictions; and, putting it under Mr. Robbins' plate at the supper table, hid himself until the dreaded revelation should occur. Mr. Robbins read it, and hunting his missing protegé, found him hiding on the piazza and weeping as if his heart would break. But, noble and wise man that he

was, he took James by the hand, led him back to his accustomed place, and comforted his anxious heart with the assurance that no obstacle would be put in the way of his complying with his convictions of duty, and that the kindly relations between him and his patrons should not be disturbed on that account.

We hear no more of this matter until young Thornwell had been graduated at South Carolina College, with the first honors of his class, at the age of nineteen, and was engaged in teaching at Sumterville, S. C., where he made profession of faith and united with old Concord Church. And now firmly decided to preach the gospel, he declared at once that purpose and began to direct his further studies to that end.

Just here it is proper to explain how young Thornwell became a Presbyterian and turned to the ministry of our Church. He was not born and bred in that faith. His mother was a member of the Baptist Church, and so lived and died. None of his generous patrons who educated him were Presbyterians. The family of Mr. Pegues, to which he was first taken, was of the Methodist persuasion. Mr. Robbins, with whom he resided afterwards, though reared a Congregationalist, was not, as already said, at that time a member of the church, but later in life united with the Episcopal Church. While at college in this city, Thornwell rarely—it is said only once—attended the Presbyterian Church. But it is related that in one of his afternoon strolls in Columbia he dropped into a book store; and, ever eager after books, he noticed one lying on the counter bearing the name "Confession of Faith." (Westminster, of course.) Struck with its contents, he bought it and took it to his room in the college. And beginning to read it, he was so fascinated with its logical unfolding of Scripture truth that he read it through that night before he lay down to sleep; and he was so thoroughly convinced by the truth it set forth, that he accepted its system of doctrine at once. Hence, when a year or two later he was converted, he naturally sought membership in the Presbyterian Church. And, in passing, let me add that in after life there never was a more sincere and ardent adherent, and an abler, nobler champion of our standards than he.

Although directing his studies in preparation for the ministry, young Thornwell continued to teach in Sumterville, and

subsequently in Cheraw, for a year or two more. Why did he not, as usual in this day, repair to the theological seminary? Our cherished institution in Columbia, although his eyes were turned to it, was then in its infancy—planted there in 1831, the year of his graduation—and with very inadequate and unattractive equipment. He was induced to go to Andover Seminary, but was not at all pleased with the conditions there; and soon went to Harvard University, where he pursued special studies for a few months.

In 1833 he was taken under care of Harmony Presbytery as a candidate for the ministry, and in 1834, when twenty-two years of age, was licensed by the same presbytery as a probationer for this office. Shortly afterwards he began the regular work of the ministry at Lancasterville, in this state, where a new church was organized, and he served his first pastorate in that and the country churches of Waxhaw and Six-Mile Creek.

At this point in my discourse it may be well to set forth Dr. Thornwell's conception of a call to the ministry and some of his early experiences in connection with this office and work. He was always a man of very clear views and very positive convictions of the truth. Though recorded later in life, I quote from his own pen his idea of a call to preach the gospel. (Collected Writings, Vol. IV., pp. 32, 33): "That a supernatural conviction of duty, wrought by the immediate agency of the Holy Ghost, is an essential element in the evidence of a true vocation to the ministry, seems to me to be the clear and authoritative doctrine of the Scriptures. Men are not led to the pastoral office as they are induced to select other professions in life; they are drawn, as a sinner is drawn to Christ, by a mighty, invincible work of the Spirit. The call of God never fails to be convincing. Men are made to feel that a woe is upon them if they preach not the Gospel. It is not that they love the work, for often, like Moses, they are reluctant to engage in it, and love at best can only render its duties pleasant; it is not that they desire the office, though in indulging this desire they seek a good thing; it is not that they are zealous for the glory of God and burn for the salvation of souls, for this is characteristic of every true believer; nor is it upon a due estimate of their talents and acquirements they promise themselves more extended usefulness in this department of labor than in any other, for

no man is anything in the kingdom of heaven except as God makes him so; but it is that the Word of the Lord is like fire in the bones; they must preach it or die; they cannot escape from the awful impression, which haunts them night and day and banishes all peace from the soul until the will is bowed, that God has laid this work upon them at the hazard of their lives."

And a striking incident connected with his entrance upon this high and holy calling is recorded. Like every other young candidate, he had his doubts and misgivings as to his call, though impelled by a conviction of duty to seek the office. He was on his way to his first, or an early, appointment in the new field to which he had been invited. And, like the struggle which involved the soul of Jesus in His temptation in the wilderness, the powers of darkness overwhelmed him, and the artful adversary plied him with the most serious misgivings. With a high-strung, sensitive nature like his, and the world appealing most powerfully to his natural ambition, it was a fearful struggle, a real Gethsemane in his experience. But the crisis came as he entered the pulpit and began the service. Light from above then beamed in upon him, peace and joy filled his soul, and the Spirit of God unloosed his fettered lips. The question was settled, the victory was won, the divine anointing was bestowed; and the charmed hearers bore testimony to his power. And from that momentous hour he was a minister called and owned of the Lord.

But though favored and encouraged in his ministry, enjoying constant evidences of the divine blessing upon his work, the young pastor did not remain long at Lancasterville. After two years in this field, Dr. Thornwell, then twenty-five years of age, was elected professor of Logic and Belles Lettres in South Carolina College and called back to this high service in his Alma Mater. How, with his exalted views of his sacred calling, he could have accepted this position which did not offer the opportunity of regularly preaching the Gospel, we are not advised. But doubtless, there were reasons unrecorded which made him recognize this to be the call of God.

However, his insatiable desire to preach the Word and his deep sense of obligation to fulfill his ministerial calling made him restive and prevented his remaining long in this otherwise con-

genial and honorable position. Before two years had elapsed, he joyfully accepted a call to the pastorate of this (Columbia) church and came back to the pulpit—which he filled with great zeal, ability and satisfaction to his flock.

But only one year passed before he was again called back to the college, this time to be its chaplain, as well as professor of Sacred Literature and Evidences of Christianity.

This position Dr. Thornwell filled with signal ability and success for ten years. While he taught Christianity from his chair with ardor and force, he served also as the duly appointed pastor of the college community, conducted the daily prayers, and preached the Gospel with burning zeal every Sabbath in the chapel. But his passion for the full and undivided work of the ministry kept him restless and dissatisfied, even with these great opportunities of usefulness to the young men of his native State and to others who shared his ministry in this prominent seat of learning. And so, when a call came to him to the pastorate of the Second Church of Baltimore, recently vacated by the distinguished Dr. Robert J. Breckinridge, he gladly consented to accept it; and Charleston Presbytery, though most reluctant to have him leave, put the call into his hands. But the College trustees, supported strongly by the faculty, availed themselves of a rule not hitherto enforced, and put a veto upon his going by refusing to release him without a year's notice in advance. However, in 1851, when another call came to him from Glebe Street Church, Charleston, he did accept it and entered once more upon coveted pastoral work.

As I now see it, it seems strange that a minister whose fame had already spread abroad throughout the land and stood in the very front rank of our preachers, should have considered a call from what was then little more than a missionary enterprise of the Second Church of Charleston, and used a small, unattractive building located on a narrow side street in an obscure situation, which in later years was abandoned for these reasons. (As a lad of twelve years, I happened to be on a visit to Charleston in March, 1851, and heard Dr. Thornwell's sermon on a trial visit to this church, the first sermon I ever heard him preach.) But, strange as it may appear that he should have accepted this call, such was his zeal to preach the Gospel that he went, entered with fervor upon the pastoral work, attracted

audiences that made the little building overflow and require enlargement of its accommodations, and greatly delighted his flock.

But scarcely eight months had passed before South Carolina College once more laid its hands upon its now distinguished alumnus and professor, and called him back to its service, this time as president as well as chaplain and professor in his former chair. Seriously hesitating and most reluctant to surrender his delightful and promising pastorate, Providence, as he felt, led him back to the college. And four years more of splendid service were given to that institution, where his administration as president was most successful at a time when it was greatly needed. But the time had now come when his Church realized that she should have his services in another sphere. Accordingly, in 1856, he was transferred to the Theological Seminary in Columbia, as professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology, and filled in connection therewith once more the pulpit of this church—for a while as stated supply, and then as installed pastor. This latter relation, however, was of short duration, on account of his final failure of health, followed August 1, 1862, by his untimely decease. It was while he served this church in 1859 that I, as a student of the Seminary, came under his ministry and heard him preach, more or less constantly, until my graduation in 1862.

Before passing from this brief outline of Dr. Thornwell's work as a preacher, it may be well to consider for a moment that apparently strange fact that, though so eminent as a preacher of eloquence, ability and popularity, and so renowned and valued throughout the Church, he should have spent so large a portion of his ministry in the State institution—where all the time he felt painfully caged and cribbed in the exercise of his ministry, restricted to very small and doubtless unappreciative audiences, and the burden of teaching was constantly repressing his energies and exhausting his strength. In looking back at the Providence which so ordered his lot, the explanation is probably to be found in this fact: At the time when young Thornwell entered South Carolina College its president was Dr. Thomas Cooper, a man captivating in many respects, but a blatant infidel, who was using his high office to poison the minds of the choicest young men of the State attending upon its chief institu-

tion of learning, and in disseminating infidel influences from which our people did not recover for a generation or more. But Dr. Thornwell seems to have been the man whom God raised up, qualified and sent to this very fountain of baleful influence to correct and purify it, and redeem the State from its pernicious power. While yet himself but a youthful student in the College, although an ardent admirer of Dr. Cooper personally, he soon discovered and began to combat and tear to pieces the flimsy infidel system of his instructor. And, as he developed more and more, he appeared to be the very man capable of destroying this evil, to which the eyes of the public had become opened, and of saving the rising generation of our cultured young men from the ruin which threatened them. To do, and to complete, this great and important work, the Lord appears to have held him in the College, and to have sent him back again and again, until the time had come for him to enter upon and fulfill his noblest and best work in connection with the School of the Prophets in this city.

And now, having given this hurried sketch of Dr. Thornwell's ministry, let us next consider what were his characteristics as a Preacher.

His bodily presence was not imposing. He was small of stature, spare of build, with diminutive limbs—his weight being hardly over 100 pounds. His shoulders were a little stooped and his chest flat and somewhat sunken. His hair was jet black and worn longer than usual in this day; and he always, as I knew him, wore side whiskers. His dress was somewhat peculiar: always black, and his everyday attire was generally a swallow-tail coat, high-heel boots and beaver hat. His voice, though rather coarse for one of his size, was not high-keyed or very strong. His manner in the pulpit appeared at first a little awkward, marked by a nodding of the head as he emphasized in reading and beginning to speak; but all this passed off as he warmed up to his subject. His action was not specially graceful, his gestures being somewhat angular, and the lifting of both hands—the right holding a large white handkerchief—was very common. But all this was unnoticed as he proceeded with his discourse. His tone in the pulpit was always solemn, and grave, and earnest. He might practise pleasantry in the class room, or on the floor of the Church courts, but never in the pulpit, where he seemed

to realize fully that he stood as an ambassador of Christ to dying men. The profoundest reverence, earnestness and zeal pervaded his pulpit utterances. And withal there was about him an inexplicable something which impressed and captivated his hearers; as one of my classmates expresses it, describing his own experience as he heard Dr. Thornwell for the first time: "A mysterious power—not universally bestowed: an attribute of greatness: a soul power that seems almost to disregard physical conditions and material instrumentalities. I think I should have had a spiritual uplift if I had gone home without hearing the great preacher say a word. It would have been a wordless sermon of great power and lasting enrichment."

His language was rather that of the schools than of the masses. He says himself that he was at first sadly deficient in the use of words; and for this reason committed to memory in early life much of the Scriptures, Milton and Shakespeare, in order that he might acquire the English tongue. And he had studied philosophy so constantly and enthusiastically that he naturally acquired the habit of thinking and speaking in terms adapted to this science. So his language was not popular. I have heard him try to preach to children; but very soon his tongue would slip off into phraseology which they could not understand. I have heard him preach to negroes, but unconsciously he dressed his thoughts in words above their comprehension. And in late years I have heard some say that they could not read his writings with pleasure because his style was not what they could readily understand. But for my own part, having become accustomed to it, his style is to me the most attractive of any author whose writings I consult. It is wonderfully clear and thoroughly accurate—always using the very best English word to express the thought. And Dr. Thornwell had so thoroughly studied the Bible and incorporated its truths and language into the very fibre of his thoughts, that his sermons and other religious writings are steeped with Scripture ideas and phraseology—his profoundest conceptions of truth and his grandest arguments in its exposition and vindication finding expression in the very words of inspiration. This adds the highest charm to his style.

Some say, too, that he lacked imagination in his preachings. But, while it is true that he did not freely indulge this faculty and

gave flights to his imaginative and descriptive powers, as some others whom I have known, his manner of sermonizing being rather that of close reasoning and impetuous argument, I did not observe any lack in this respect when I sat under his ministry; nor do I perceive it now when I read his sermons, which appear to me to abound in appropriate figures and the choicest rhetoric.

Some again have entertained the idea that Dr. Thornwell was cold and intellectual in his preaching. There never was a greater mistake. While his sermons were indeed intellectual, in that they were profound, logical and distinctly argumentative, they were most thoroughly Scriptural and spiritual. He heartily accepted the Bible as the infallible and all-sufficient Word of God, which alone he was commissioned to preach. And I never sat under any preacher who more faithfully expounded Scripture. And as he had himself drunk deeply of the fountains of grace in his profound studies and in the frequent and severe discipline to which Providence subjected him, he poured forth in his discourses the most spiritual views and applications of Divine truth.

Another characteristic of Dr. Thornwell's preaching was—what Dr. James W. Alexander notes in his "Thoughts on Preaching"—that he often used great themes on which he prepared great sermons. As evidence of this, look at the few sermons which have been preserved and are published in his "Collected Writings." Many of these great sermons on great themes were his baccalaureate sermons while chaplain of South Carolina College, preached specially to the graduating classes of that institution. One of these, a commencement sermon, I have lately re-read, in order specially to judge of his style and his method of preaching. It is that on "The Necessity of the Atonement," delivered to the graduating class of South Carolina College in 1844. It is in itself a masterly treatise on theology, covering all the essentials of the Christian scheme, and setting forth the whole plan of redemption in its clearest and most Scriptural view. As I thus read it over thoughtfully and carefully, I was not surprised at what occurred in my personal experience many years ago. While I was laboring as evangelist of Charleston Presbytery in 1867-9 and was intimately associated with the ministers of Charleston, I remember that one day Dr. Gir-

ardeau remarked to me: "Dr. Thornwell's sermon on 'The Necessity of the Atonement' has done more in shaping my theology than anything that ever came into my hands." (Of course, he had no reference to the Bible.) And not long afterwards I was talking with the Rev. Christopher P. Gadsden, a prominent and most evangelical Episcopal minister of that city—rector of St. Luke's Church—and he made identically the same remark. Later I learned that Mr. Gadsden was a member of that graduating class to which the sermon was preached, of 1844, and was chairman of the committee which requested and secured its publication.

And this brings me to the consideration of the effects of Dr. Thornwell's preaching. None who knew him would question his matchless ability, his profound learning, his fervid eloquence, and his spiritual unction. But what were the practical, spiritual effects of his great preaching? That he was a Revivalist, whose ministry was distinguished by gathering souls into the kingdom—as was Dr. Daniel Baker, of that day, and Dr. R. A. Torrey, of the present time—none would say. He seems not to have directed his efforts especially upon this line. But, as to the real, permanent effects of his ministry in upholding the truth, in vindicating the Word of God, in relieving doubts, in comforting the sorrowing, and in edifying the saints, there is abundant testimony. Everywhere that God called him to preach, the common people heard him gladly and flocked to attend upon his ministrations. It is related that in his earliest ministry in Lancaster County the country people heard him with rapt attention and delight, and sometimes were so charmed and impressed under his preaching that unconsciously they gathered about the pulpit as they eagerly listened to his powerful preaching. The late Dr. A. A. Morse, of our Synod, once told me that while he was a student of South Carolina College, James H. Carlisle, the eminent saint and distinguished educator of my own city, who lately passed away, entered the college. His father, a local Methodist preacher, had had serious misgivings about sending his son there to sit under the Calvanistic preaching of Chaplain Thornwell. (We Methodists and Presbyterians of this day understand each other better.) But Sabbath after Sabbath, upon returning from the chapel services, young Carlisle would stop at Morse's room to talk over

the sermon, and freely declared that he had never heard the Scriptures so delightfully and profitably expounded before. He, too, was of the class and committee that claimed the sermon on "The Necessity of the Atonement."

Only the other day a brother was telling me that Dr. Brackett, my gifted classmate, who was not given to emotional excitement, had told him how, while we were students together in the Seminary, he had wept under Dr. Thornwell's preaching as he unfolded and pressed the claims of foreign missions from the pulpit. When he was pastor of Glebe Street Church, Charleston, I have been told, that one evening he preached a sermon on the Judgment; and, without any appeals to the imagination or pathetic picturing of the terrors attending that great event, but in the earnest, powerful opening up of the awful truth, the whole congregation appeared terror-stricken and unconsciously seized the backs of the pews, as when Jonathan Edwards preached his memorable sermon on "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." One young man, who in later years became an associate of mine, was present on this occasion, and said he never was so frightened in all his life.

At the General Assembly in Indianapolis, in 1859, it is related that Dr. Thornwell preached a sermon from the text, "Simon, son of Jonas; lovest thou Me?" which melted the whole audience to tears.

These are a few instances of the immediate effect of his preaching, which might be multiplied. And, if I may bear my own personal testimony, although I had enjoyed the ministrations of fine preachers before I came to the Seminary, I never sat under the preaching of any minister who so impressed, instructed, and edified me as did Dr. Thornwell. And so from my own experience, I am prepared to endorse most heartily this glowing portrayal of his preaching as given by Dr. Palmer:

"The feature most remarkable in this prince of pulpit orators was the rare union of vigorous logic with strong emotion. He reasoned always, but never coldly. He did not present truth in what Bacon calls 'the dry light of the understanding'; clear, indeed, but without the heat which warms and fructifies. Dr. Thornwell wove his argument in fire. His mind warmed with the friction of his own thoughts, and glowed with the rapidity of his own motion; and the speaker was borne along in what

seemed to others a chariot of flame. One must have listened to him to form an adequate conception of what we mean. Filled with the sublimity of his theme, and feeling in the depths of his soul its transcendent importance, he could not preach the Gospel of the grace of God with the coldness of a philosopher. As the flood of his discourse set in, one could perceive the ground-swell from beneath, the heaving tide of passionate emotion which rolled it on. Kindling with a secret inspiration, his manner lost its slight constraint; all angularity of gesture and awkwardness of posture suddenly disappeared; the spasmodic shaking of the head entirely ceased; his slender form dilated; his deep grey eye lost its drooping expression; the soul came and looked forth, lighting it up with a strange brilliancy; his frail body rocked and trembled as under a divine afflatus, as though the impatient spirit would rend its tabernacle and fly forth to God and heaven upon the wings of his impassioned words; until his fiery eloquence, rising with the greatness of his conceptions, burst upon the hearers in some grand climax, overwhelming in its majesty and resistless in its effect. * * * *

"This generation will never look upon his like again; a single century cannot afford to produce his equal. It may listen to much lucid exposition, much close and powerful reasoning, much tender and earnest appeal, much beautiful and varied imagery; but never from the lips of one man can it be stirred by vigor of argument fused by a seraphic glow and pouring itself forth in strains which linger in the memory like the chant of angels."

And now, turning our attention for a little while to

DR. THORNWELL AS A TEACHER—

I have already sketched incidentally the history of his work as such. But let me recapitulate. Shortly after his graduation at South Carolina College, he began teaching a private school in Sumterville. The next year found him principal of the Cheraw Academy, where he taught one or two sessions more. At the age of twenty-five he was professor of Logic and Belles Lettres in his Alma Mater. Returning to the same institution from a year's pastorate of this church, he filled the chair of Sacred Literature and Evidences of Christianity, along with the chaplaincy. A few years later, after eight months' pastorate in Charleston,

he returned once more to the College, which he served as president, chaplain and professor in the same chair. And, finally, he was transferred to the chair of Theology in the Columbia Seminary, where he served seven years, to the end of his short life. So that, while he usually served in the dual capacity of Preacher and Teacher, for the greater part of the thirty years allowed him for the service of the Church he was engaged in teaching.

And what shall I say of him in this capacity? My own deliberate opinion is that as such Dr. Thornwell stood in a class by himself. I thought I had had excellent teachers before I came to the Seminary; we had other able and successful instructors there; but, in my judgment, none was to be mentioned in the same category with Dr. Thornwell. All in all, he completely towered above any other I have known as a teacher. My own opinion in this respect is fully sustained by the judgment of others who sat with me in the Seminary, and whose impressions I have secured. And Dr. Palmer, than whom none knew him more thoroughly and was more capable of forming a correct opinion—through association with him as fellow-professor in the Seminary, and close and intimate fellowship with him for twenty years in this city—expresses his judgment in even stronger terms.

But what were Dr. Thornwell's characteristics as a Teacher?

First, a genuine enthusiasm in the subject which he taught. No matter what it was—whether the ancient languages, belles lettres, philosophy, sacred literature or theology—he could not teach it in a cold, formal or superficial way. Such was the keenness of his intellect, the ardor of his temperament, and the innate passion of his soul for the truth, that he was impelled to investigate thoroughly every subject for himself and to incorporate into his own nature the knowledge acquired. Hence, he ever brought into the professor's chair a zeal and a love for what he was to teach, which at once impressed and captivated his pupils, and inspired interest and enthusiasm on their part.

Second, his profound, accurate, and available scholarship.

Intellectually, Dr. Thornwell was from boyhood a genius. His mind possessed that quickness, that penetration, that ready grasp of the truth, which put him altogether out of the ordinary. As evidence of this, read the records of his boyhood's studies,

and his letters written at that period. At seventeen he entered the Junior class of South Carolina College; and, though it was composed of forty-three young men, many of excellent ability and ambitious for its honors, only a few days after his admission he was acknowledged to be its unquestioned leader; and in two years graduated at its head. He was from childhood throughout his life, a voracious reader, covering in his reading a wide field of literature; and he read with such absorption, and care, and intelligence, and comprehension, that whatever he read was ever afterwards his own. Thus, his knowledge of literature, philosophy, and the Scriptures was not only profound, but such was his mastery of them, and the clearness of his disciplined memory, that they were always at hand for ready use. I could give from personal knowledge illustrations of this, in the readiness with which he could turn to any book in his well-selected library and show the author's treatment of the subject which happened to be in hand.

And this thorough and practical scholarship could not fail to command the respect and confidence of his pupils.

I well remember a little incident, the like of which is often told. Dr. Thornwell's text-book in theology was Calvin's Institutes, the meaning of which, even to the barest historical allusions, he brought out with wonderful comprehension and thoroughness. And one day after a recitation, as several of us were talking over the lesson, my classmate, Dr. Jas. S. Cozby, remarked: "I tell you, brethren, that man, Jimmie Thornwell, finds in Calvin's Institutes what John Calvin himself never thought of." Such was the impression he made as a teacher.

Third, his quick and marvellous apprehension of the needs of his students.

I never heard, while sitting at his feet, anything about Pedagogy and Child Study, as in this day. But, whether Dr. Thornwell had studied these subjects as such or not, with his own ardent, bright, impressible nature, he had traversed all the roads through which his pupils were passing; and so, readily apprehended their difficulties, entered into their experiences, and knew just how to lead them out. Among my associates in the Seminary were many men of fine intellect, trained powers, and ardent study. And time and again I have known them to bring up their difficulties in the class room; they would state

them perhaps bunglingly, hardly knowing themselves how to express them. But I never knew Dr. Thornwell to hesitate for a moment in reply. He seemed always to catch instantly their difficulties, and was able immediately to answer correctly and satisfactorily.

Fourth, his living illustration of what he taught.

As intimated before, Dr. Thornwell's mental constitution and habit were to appropriate to himself his acquirements, make them part and parcel of his being, and live out in his own life the truth that he had taken in. The logic which he studied he put into his sermons, lectures, and writings; the metaphysics in which he reveled, found illustration in his own mental frames and character; and the Scriptures, which he loved, and searched, and preached, and taught, above everything else, he incorporated into his own life. Thus, he stood before his students as an exemplification—not perfect, indeed, as the Divine Master before His disciples, but, like Paul, whom they might follow even as he followed Christ—a striking embodiment, a living illustration, of the principles which he taught.

Such was his thoroughness, that I confess I never made, and seldom ever heard, a satisfactory recitation to Dr. Thornwell. But some way his principles of truth got hold of me; and in my subsequent ministry I found myself ever building upon the lines he had marked out for me.

Fifth, his method and spirit in the class-room.

Dr. Thornwell usually employed a text-book, which formed the basis of his instructions; but he supplemented it by lectures, which were followed by questions—after the Socratic method. His lectures on Theology, which it was my privilege to hear, were always delivered with the utmost solemnity, reverence, and earnestness. They were like sermons from the pulpit, and the students felt their solemnizing, worshipful power as they heard him. But the ordinary recitations were characterized by a freedom and bonhomie which relieved them of monotony and tediousness, and always made them bright and interesting. He managed thus to get very near to his pupils, and to keep in close personal touch with them.

Finally, his faculty of impressing himself upon others.

Beyond any man whom I ever came in contact with, Dr. Thornwell possessed what we call "personal magnetism." His

ardent temperament, his simple, easy sociability, and his capacity of entering readily into the feelings of others, made him a most attractive companion, won the closest and tenderest friendship of those associated with him, and naturally drew his students to him and exerted a powerful influence over them.

This led, as we would expect, to a frequent, though generally unconscious, imitation of him both in and out of the pulpit, which was sometimes really amusing. But in a good way it accomplished much. Doubtless, no teacher or preacher who ever served our Church, so impressed his principles, his views, and his character upon his pupils and others associated with him as did Dr. Thornwell. This is recorded of him as College professor; and by personal observation and experience, I know it of him as Seminary professor.

It is often said—and I can readily credit it—that it was Thornwell's stamp upon Dr. B. M. Palmer, who was so long and intimately associated with him, himself gifted and impressible, a fine subject for the stamp, which made him the grand and towering character and leader that he was. And, although Dr. Girardeau was never a pupil of Dr. Thornwell's, yet, through his fellowship with him for many years in the same Presbytery, and his profound admiration and passionate love of him, I am convinced that Thornwell largely shaped and promoted his noble career. And the same might be said, no doubt, of the late Drs. Thos. E. Peck, T. Dwight Witherspoon, Wm. T. Hall, and Henry F. Hoyt, and many others who have illumined the pages of our Church's history.

And thus, as *Preacher and Teacher,* as well as *Theologian and Ecclesiologist,* Dr. Thornwell is worthy of genuine and hearty commemoration on this Centennial of his birth. Let us cherish tenderly and sacredly his memory, as we learn the many lessons of his illustrious career; and let us fondly and devotedly conserve the grand and noble work which he performed for our State and for our Church.

II.

Dr. Thornwell as a Theologian

REV. THORNTON WHALING, D. D., LL. D., COLUMBIA, S. C.

The history of the world is largely the biography of its great men. Certain historic forces are to be discerned at work in any particular period, but these forces first become effective when they are incarnated in a human character and expounded in a human life. The most significant event which has occurred in Presbyterian circles in South Carolina during the last one hundred years was the appearance of James Henley Thornwell as a gift from God to His Church, with the divine mission of interpreting anew in the light of the best philosophy and science of his day the essential contents of the Holy Word. And his significance is well-nigh exhausted in his master work as a theologian; for, while he was a preacher, teacher, writer and ecclesiastic, he was always the theological preacher, teacher, author and ecclesiastic. He touched no subject in any sphere at any time without pressing through the accidental and circumstantial to the fundamental and essential in reason and in the Scriptures upon which a valid conclusion alone could rest.

Some of the marks which characterized Dr. Thornwell's theology were, first, that he was one of the most *philosophic* of theologians. He thought there was more laziness than piety, more stupidity than consecration in refusing to use the human reason up to the full limits of its power in every region of thought and of faith. Revelation, instead of denying the authority of reason, made its threefold appeal to this noblest faculty, whose function it was first, to weigh the evidences which proved the revelation true; second, to interpret the contents of the revelation, reducing them to logical and systematic form; and, above all, thirdly, to evince the harmony between the teachings of the revealed word and the deliverances of right reason, at least to the extent of showing that there is no contradiction between them. Some of his strongest contributions to theology are in this last field; and more than one scholar and student has expressed the opinion that he reached his highest level in his famous discussion of "Morell's Philosophy of Religion," notably the section entitled "Religion Psychologically Considered," which is the most purely speculative and metaphysical

of all his discussions. But, while strongly philosophic, Dr. Thornwell was also intensely *biblical* as a theologian. When Revelation was proven true by sufficient evidence, and its contents were discovered by a just interpretation, the only legitimate procedure was for the human reason to check up its processes by the deliverance of the divine reason in the Revealed Word. A magnificent illustration of this true theological method, which combines absolute loyalty to the teachings of the divine reason with the most intense use of human reason up to its utmost possible limits, may be found in that monumental tract on "Election and Reprobation," which comes as near as any human document can do to saying the last word on the subject from both the rational and biblical points of view. The conciliation of reason and faith, the harmony of philosophy and theology, the proved concurrence of the human and divine reason presented to him no impossible task, but prescribed for him the chief work of the theologian, and at this task he worked with adamantine industry, with sanctified genius, with ample scholarship and with a liberal success, as shown by the four massive volumes of his "Collected Writings," and by his powerful influence upon hosts of admiring students.

Uniting these two traits of the genuine theologian, viz: that he was philosophic, yet biblical, he also combined two other marks which might seem inconsistent. He was a true and rational conservative, who knew the results of the philosophic and theological thinking of the past, and who knew that Plato had not philosophized and Augustine theologized in vain. The catholic conclusions of that straight line of philosophers who have expounded the contents of the human reason were not regarded by him as *brutum fulmen,* and the oecumenical attainments of the Church in the Nicene Trinitarianism, and the Chalcedonian Christology and the Anselmic and Reformed Soteriology was not regarded by him as a delusive mirage. He borrowed no wood, hay or stubble from the dead, dry-as-dust, by-gone systems to build into his theological structure; but he borrowed many solid and precious stones from the great master builders of the past. Too true a scholar to be a radical, he must be a conservative; he had taken the measure of Calvin and Anselm, of Hamilton and Kant, and he knew that none of these

mighty intellectual wrestlers had toiled for naught; he knew that they had been as successful as he could well hope to be, and he enriched his theology with the ripe results of their mental toil and travail in obedience to the great law that "other men labored and ye are entered into their labors." But he combined with this conservatism a striking originality, an almost daring theological initiative. If I will not be misunderstood, I may say Dr. Thornwell was a theological progressive; he did not believe that the goal of the full unfolding of the total contents of Revelation had yet been reached; there was rich ore in the Scriptures yet which had not been adequately mined, and through the *stadium* allotted to him he worked with a single eye and with consuming intensity at this very task of the fuller development in systematic and rational form of the Revelation found in God's Word.

Some striking instances of this originality now fall to be considered. First and foremost, I mention the large place and the novel treatment which he gave to Christian Ethics as a section of Systematic Theology. Ethics is divided into three parts: First, the Metaphysics of Ethics, or the Ontological predicates which underlie it; second, the Psychology of Ethics, or the Method in which moral distinctions are drawn; and third, Practical Ethics, or a description and a classification of the duties which every man ought to perform. Quite a number of Dr. Thornwell's lectures are devoted to the first two divisions, the Metaphysic and the Psychology of Ethics, notably his remarkable lectures, (the two ablest, I think, which ever came from his pen), the one on Moral Government and the other the State and Nature of Sin; in fact, the last six of his sixteen theological lectures are predominantly ethical; and he published a little treatise on Truth, which he described as giving one-third of a system of practical ethics, benevolence and justice being the other two-thirds. This is a striking innovation in theological science. Compare the monumental system of Dr. Charles Hodge, who was his contemporary, and see how full it is of the dogmas of theology and how comparatively barren in the field of Christian ethics, and you get the right angle from which to view what I almost venture to call the striking theological invention of our Carolina expounder, viz: the marriage of theo-

logical dogma to Scriptural or Christian ethics, so that dogmas and duties are really fused into unity in this system, which we name the Thornwellian Theology. Others had seen the importance of union in a speculative system of creed and deed, but the distinction of the largest success in achieving this union belongs to Dr. Thornwell, and it is no small part of his title to lasting renown.

But in the field of theology purely considered, we find impressive illustrations of his individual initiative and theological progressiveness—for example, his definition and divisions of theology. Theology is the Science of Religion; or it is that system of truth in its logical connection and dependence which, when spiritually perceived, results in true religion. There are two modes of knowing the truth, first, the speculative; second, the spiritual, which is faith or religion. It is only objectively, therefore, that theology is the science of religion. The question arises, is religion speculative or practical; the answer being it is neither exclusively, but both. It is neither exclusively cognition, feeling, nor volition; but it involves all three. It is the result of a life which fuses into a higher unity elements drawn from every part of human nature. We are to avoid the mistake of supposing that these separable elements are added to one another so that the religious man first knows, then feels, then wills; but rather in the religious life marked by holiness, cognition, feeling, volition coexist in the holy activities of the religious man. We are to avoid the still more dangerous error that religion can be divorced from its object, Who must contain in Himself the truth which the intellect cognizes, the beauty which the emotions embrace, the good toward which the will energizes. There can be no religion apart from God, the object, any more than apart from man, the subject, and the relations between these two. The first division of theology, then, consists of the necessary relations between God and man expressed in moral government and regulated by the principle of distributive justice. Man is God's creature and servant, and as long as he obeys will be rewarded; but as soon as he disobeys will be condemned. In a system of unmodified moral government probation would be endless; or, if terminated at all, would be terminated only by failure. But, while God

cannot be less, He may be more than just—that is, He may be gracious. He may deign to alter the status of His creature and make him a son instead of a servant, and thus He limits the period of probation as to duration, promising to accept obedience for a limited period in place of obedience for all the endless future, thus introducing the idea of justification. Further, He limits the probation as to persons, making the natural head or progenitor of the race the representative of all other members of the race, promising to accept his obedience in the stead of the obedience of his descendants, thus introducing Federal Headship, with its features of Substitution and Imputation. Historically, this was the first form of religion in our world, and we may call it the Covenant of Works, or natural religion, and its theology the theology of natural religion, which is the second great division of theology. But the covenant broke down through the failure of its Federal Head, leaving the purpose of God to change the status of His creature from a servant to a son still unchanged, although His creature had now become His sinful creature. No new principle is applied in the modification of Moral Government, which has to be made to fit the status of a sinful creature. Federal Headship is still the master key; God has never dealt with our race on any other principle. Only two probations have ever been offered, the one in the first Adam, the other in the second Adam; so that the Adamic principle governs the religious history of our world. The justification of many through the obedience of one is still the plan—has always been God's plan. Some new features, however, appear for the first time. Election, or the choice of those to be represented; atonement for the removal for guilt: regeneration for the removal of corruption, are added. And we have supernatural religion, or the Covenant of Grace, and its theology, the theology of supernatural religion, or the third great division of Theology.

All this sounds simple to us now, but Dr. Thornwell has this distinction, that he is the first man in the whole history of theological thinking that put these things in this way and said them after his *fashion.*

In still further illustration, his teachings upon the fundamental question of Theology, the existence of God, combines the elements of completeness, simplicity and novelty. God's exist-

ence is not known by intuition, else there would be a God-consciousness, in which God as an object was immediately known, but "no man hath seen God at any time." Nor is God's existence established by a process of syllogistic reasoning, and the common theological arguments for His existence are of value only as fully unfolding the contents of the knowledge already possessed. But positively God's existence is reached by immediate inference necessarily drawn from the primitive beliefs or faith of the mind. There are many arguments, but only one proof, and that consists of the immediate and direct inference drawn from the soul's necessary beliefs as they are developed by experience. The so-called arguments for the being of God are valid only when we consider them as statements of some aspect of these immediate inferences. The cosmological argument is the inference drawn from a necessary faith in causation. The moral argument is an inference from faith in a moral law to a law-giver and judge. The ontological argument is an inference from belief in the two correlatives, the finite and infinite, to the existence of both. The union of scientific accuracy and amazing simplicity in this position render it a marvel that no theologian had anticipated him in this teaching, but it is the prerogative of genius, especially when illumined by divine wisdom, to unravel the most intricate phenomena by the discovery of some law whose combined universality and simplicity provokes wonder and which remains forever afterward a part of the spiritual riches of the race. Dr. Thornwell's thesis that God's existence is an immediate inference drawn in some new aspect from each one of the mind's primitive beliefs in turn and necessarily developed by experience, has left the theologian only the work of illustration and exposition in this field.

Again, his views upon the Freedom of the Human Will, show that he was the master instead of the slavish expounder of a system inherited from the past. Determinism, or the theory that the dispositions of the soul infallibly control the volitions of the will, might have applied to the case of Adam if he had maintained his original condition; and if the theory of Determinism had been universally true, then Adam would have remained holy until this day. But in the strategic case of our first parent, this theory of the will as a complete theory, was shattered into frag-

ments; for Adam's dispositions *exhypothesi* were all holy, but his volition was altogether sinful. So that, without reluctance or hesitation, he affirmed the self-determination of the will in the supreme case of the first sin of our first parent. This self-determination of the will, designed to fit for probation, was lost when the probation was ended by failure and the will became penally enslaved to the evil dispositions it had originated; but to unite Calvinism to the out-worn and exploded dogma of Determinism was a measure to which Dr. Thornwell would give "place by way of subjection, no, not for an hour." It is one of the unfortunate features of our doctrinal history that quite a number of exponents of our theology have allowed this speculative dogma of Determinism—of doubtful philosophic reputation—to become identified in many minds with our system of faith and doctrine. The splendid service of Jonathan Edwards must be largely discounted by the rigorous and universal determinism which he made central and controlling in his philosophy and theology, and with which he has poisoned much of the thinking of those who are in the line of development from him; and, in striking contrast, the transcendent service of Dr. Thornwell is greatly enhanced by his demonstration that our theology must expel this alien intruder by substituting for it a more comprehensive and truly philosophic and scriptural doctrine of Human Freedom.

But the most valuable work of our master Theologian was accomplished in the Theology of Redemption by the supreme and regulative place which he assigned *Adoption*. In fact, the organic and unifying principle in Thornwell's theology is found in his doctrine of Adoption. The question proposed, both in natural religion and in supernatural religion, was the same, viz: how may a servant, through adoption, become a son. In the Covenant of Works the question relates to a righteous servant; in the Covenant of Grace to an unholy and condemned servant; but the end proposed in each case is the same, the change from the status of a servant to that of a son through adoption. From this point of view, Election is election "into the adoption of sons"; Justification is a means devised by which the standing of the servant may be so assured that adoption to sonship shall certainly follow; Federal Headship again is a sublime means which the adoptive

decree utilizes in order that the one who is represented shall receive this gracious benefit of the change from the status of a servant to that of a son; Regeneration is the effective way in which the spirit of sonship is made real in those who have secured the adoption of sons. No other system of theology has assigned so large a place to this ruling conception which occupies so supreme a position in the Scriptures and in religious experience; and in making Adoption central, Dr. Thornwell is at once the more scriptural and the more philosophic. This is his chief achievement as a Theologian, making a distinct advance upon the Reformed Soteriology and that of all subsequent thinkers, by giving Adoption the regal position assigned to it in revelation, and belonging to it in Christian experience, and which theology ought to recognize in its systematic construction of Scripture and experience by giving Adoption the same influential and regulative place in the doctrinal system.

But I cannot speak further; my time and your patience forbid. "If I have done well and as is fitting the story, it is that what I desired; but if slenderly and meanly, it is that which I could attain unto."

In closing, I remark that Dr. Thornwell was fortunate in at least one of his successors in the chair of theology in the Columbia Seminary; for Dr. John L. Girardeau, while not a slavish copyist, was a true disciple of his famous predecessor; and with equal gifts of mind and graces of heart carried to still further development the theologizing which he inherited with his chair. The theology of Thornwell and Girardeau is one, and seldom in the history of the Church have two minds so similarly endowed and equally gifted labored in such close conjunction and inner harmony in theological construction and work. Dr. Thornwell was fortunate, too, in having a great historic Church born just at the right moment to receive the impress of his genius and spirit; and in some just sense the Southern Presbyterian Church is his colossal monument; and John Knox is no more completely incarnate in the Church in Scotland than is "James Henley Thornwell embodied in the Presbyterian Church of the South." That great Church is fortunate beyond all speaking in having as its representative Theologian and Ecclesiastic a man of his type; ample in scholarship, profound in research, accurate in

reasoning, conservative in temper and yet progressive in spirit; above all, saintly in life, the expression in character and devotion and intensity of consecration of that mighty system of doctrine which not only mastered his intellect, but moulded all the deepest springs of his innermost personality. And thus the Theologian was the saint, who poured out through press and pulpit and professor's chair the combined stores of learning and genius and exalted saintliness. The Synod of South Carolina, therefore, one hundred years after his birth, with profound appreciation of his unrivalled influence and imperial services, gives devout thanks to Almighty God for the gracious gift of JAMES HENLEY THORNWELL, THE THEOLOGIAN.

III.

Dr. Thornwell as an Ecclesiologist

REV. A. M. FRASER, D. D., STAUNTON, VA.

Dr. Thornwell was not first of all an ecclesiologist. He was first of all an eminent Christian, a mighty preacher of the gospel, a profound theologian and philosopher; and afterwards an ecclesiologist. His genius, his taste and his vocation all led him to the direct study of other subjects, and his work as an expounder of Church government was incidental and even accidental. But, as often happens, the by-product of his genius left as lasting and beneficient an impression upon the Church as those services upon which he consciously concentrated his powers.

His work in Ecclesiology was original. The mark he has left on the organization and work of the Church is distinct; it is of inestimable value, and we trust it will endure till that time of which the Scriptures tell us, when the Head of the Church shall present it to Himself "a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing"; but "holy and without blemish."

I would not imply, however, that Dr. Thornwell himself disparaged the study of Church government, or that he thought it unworthy of his greatest powers. In his famous debate with Dr. Hodge in the Rochester Assembly of 1860, to which I shall have occasion to refer repeatedly, while he declared that the doctrines of grace were of more importance than the doctrines of government, yet, he claimed that the doctrines of government were second in importance only to the doctrines of grace. He believed that Church government was an essential and inseparable part of a revealed gospel. All those splendid descriptions which the Bible applies to the Church he accepted in all the fullness and accuracy of their meaning. To him the Church was a new creation, rivaling in splendor and beauty the original creation, at which "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy"; it was the "Kingdom of Heaven," "the House of God," "a glorious Church," "the Church of the Living God," "the pillar and ground of the truth," "the temple of the Holy Ghost," "the body of Christ," "the fullness of Him that filleth all in all," "the Bride of the Lamb," "adorned as a Bride to meet the Bridegroom," whose never fading bridal freshness and radiance and beauty will make her the most resplendent

created object in Heaven. Her constitution and her laws, her officers and her courts, her administration and her discipline, her worship and her fellowship, her labors and her achievements, her tears and her prayers, her struggles and her victories, all excited his admiration and devotion as reflecting the divine glory of Him who is her Author and her Object, her indwelling King and her exceeding great reward.

To him, all that is revealed concerning the Church expressed the divine sense of the beautiful, the orderly, the puissant and the enduring. It thrilled with the joy of the divine heart and pulsated with the life of God. So that the peroration of his great speech in the Rochester Assembly, a discussion of the mere mechanical structure and operations of the Church, is said to have been "a thrilling appeal that moved all hearts, holding the Assembly and the thronged galleries in breathless attention."

In the sphere of Ecclesiology, Dr. Thornwell was a happy combination of the thinker and the man of action without impairing his superiority in either sphere. As a thinker, there was no subject too abstruse or intricate for him. As an equal with equals he could commune with Sir William Hamilton, and Kant, and Aristotle. At his death it was printed concerning him in Great Britain that America regarded him as "an incarnation of sheer intelligence." While this expression did not do justice to the depth and warmth of his emotional nature, or to his mastery of questions of practical administration, it did not overstate America's estimate of his intellect. Dr. T. C. Johnson, the biographer of Dr. Dabney, says that in the nineteenth century America produced three theologians: Shedd, Thornwell and Dabney. He says that Dr. Dabney's writings entitle him to the first place amongst these three, but adds: "It is not forgotten that Dr. Thornwell was cut off early in life." Dr. Peck forty years ago said that three South Carolinians had attained to preëminence in literary work. These three are John C. Calhoun, Hugh S. Legare and James H. Thornwell. When such a mind was turned to Church government, from the necessity of nature it must reason, it must be exhaustive, analytic, discriminating, making nice distinctions, tracing things back to their origin and forward to their results. There were giants in those days. The Alexanders, father and sons, Drs. Hodge and Magill were at Prince-

ton; Drs. Breckinridge and Robinson at Danville, in Kentucky; Drs. B. M. Smith and Dabney at Union, in Virginia; Drs. Edward Robinson and H. B. Smith at Union, in New York; Drs. W. G. T. Shedd, Edward A. Park and Austin Phelps at Auburn; Drs. Adger, Palmer and Thornwell at Columbia, in South Carolina. These men did not think it unworthy of their great learning and ability to debate the nicest distinctions in Church government, even though their lives may have been devoted to the study of the larger subject of Systematic Theology. They well knew that, however acute might be the angle of divergence between truth and error at the beginning, the lines had only to be projected far enough to measure the whole diameter between absolute truth and ruinous falsehood. With all Church history spread out before them as a panorama, seeing the errors, the tyrannies, the corruptions and the loss of spiritual power that had so often entered the Church as a result of what at first seemed the most trivial and innocent innovations, they were led to repeat with the frequency of a motto, "Beware of the beginnings of error!" Though but fifty years have passed since Thornwell died, the time has none too soon arrived for recalling the man and his mission. Has there not in these modern times set in a mighty tide of impatience with principles and distinctions in Church government, and a demand for the common sense, and the practical, and for the doing of things, as if anything could be common sense that is out of harmony with the supreme reason, or anything practical that is not true to the ideal, or anything really done till it is rightly done? And do we not need to gaze, and ponder, and pray, and learn anew the lesson that zeal is safe only when guided by knowledge, and that it is not only well to do what is right, but of the last importance to do right things in the right way?

But Dr. Thornwell was a man of action as well as a thinker. Whilst he must know the theory, he was no mere theorizer; whilst he must determine the doctrine, he was no mere doctrinaire; whilst he must see the vision, he was far from being visionary; and whilst he must discover the principle, it was in order to insure the practice and the results. Accordingly, when the Assembly in Lexington, Ky., in 1857, found the Church at a crisis where it must pass through the ordeal of recasting its rules of discipline, the moderator promptly and confidently se-

lected Dr. Thornwell to be the chairman of the committee on revison, and the one to do the work. This undertaking required breadth of view, a logical and self-consistent plan, a wide knowledge of the practice of courts, a keen sense of human rights, a spiritual insight into the meaning of ecclesiastical law, a familiarity with the Scriptures, a capacity for tireless patience in the elaboration of details, and withal a literary style at once compact, comprehensive and perspicuous. The moderator, in writing to Dr. Thornwell afterwards concerning his appointment, said: "I was strongly drawn towards you that night, by an influence which seemed to me more like a special divine influence than anything I remember to have experienced during my whole life." The appointment gave universal satisfaction in the Church, which felt no uneasiness since the work was in his hands.

Let us pause just here to catch a picture of Dr. Thornwell as he tranquilly crosses the threshold of his stirring career. When he is only twenty-four years of age and has been an ordained minister less than two years, he is sent by the Presbytery of Bethel as a commissioner to the General Assembly. It is the historic Assembly of 1837, which meets in the city of Philadelphia, and which witnesses the debate between the Old and the New School parties and ends in the disruption of the Church. He is a man of medium height, of spare build and somewhat stooped in his carriage. An abundance of soft, black hair is smoothly brushed down around his face in long, ample folds, and meeting his short, black beard on the side of his face, gives the effect of a dark oval frame about his none too healthy countenance. His eyelids droop when his countenance is in repose and through the narrow opening between them can be seen rich, kind, brilliant dark eyes that not only give tone to the face, but also transfigure the whole man. A stranger, seeing those eyes, will surely look again. When his mind begins to work, the eyelids no longer droop, and the eyes dilate and grow. At this time he writes, "I have not opened my mouth in the Assembly except to give a vote, and I do not expect to do so." The debate is the culmination of a long and heated controversy and the excitement in the Assembly is intense; yet he has no speech to make, no thought of electrifying the Assembly, or of making a name for himself; no conceit of a mission to lead the Church. He feels a very weighty respon-

sibility, it is true, but that responsibility is all discharged when he has listened, and learned, and thought, and prayed, and cast his vote aright. A refreshing example of the modesty of youthful genius! But Dr. Thornwell was not to remain a silent listener to the debates of the Church. In the meeting of the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia, in the fall of 1838, we find him conspicuous in the arena of debate. From that time on till he breathed his last, in 1862, his white plume always marked the thickest of the fight. In the Cincinnati Assembly, in 1845, he was the most commanding personality in the body, though only thirty-two years of age. In the Richmond Assembly, in 1847, he was chosen moderator, when only thirty-four years of age—probably the youngest person who ever presided over so august an ecclesiastical court. Hear these fine sentiments from Dr. Peck: "There are no contests more interesting than those of the forum and the deliberative assembly; no battles so grand as those waged for principle; no sufferings so sacred as those which are endured for truth; no struggles so suited to elicit human sympathy as those which are maintained with the tyranny of the devil and sin and hell, those which take place in the arena of the soul itself, between powers once pervaded by the spirit of unity in the service of their God, but now split asunder in consequence of the fatal schism effected by the fall. Such is the drama that moves before us as the story of Thornwell's life unfolds itself."

Now that I come to recount Dr. Thornwell's contributions to the science of Church government, I shall be compelled by all the conditions under which I speak to confine myself to a simple recital of the salient points of the system he expounded. I greatly regret that Dr. Whaling, in his address this morning on "Dr. Thornwell as a Theologian," restrained himself from discussing the vital relation of Dr. Thornwell's theology to his ecclesiology. That relation exists, and Dr. Whaling is so competent to discuss it. I feel obliged to choose a different line of thought. I will give the summary as briefly as the subject matter will permit, but as fully as the time will allow.

1. At the foundation of Dr. Thornwell's theory of the Church lay an absolute conviction that the Bible is the very Word of God, which reaches us through human channels, it is true, but is wholly uncontaminated with human imperfections by coming in

that way. Being the Word of God, it is free from all error and becomes a perfect and sufficient rule of faith and practice in all matters of religion. To questions of Church government, as to all others, he applied that noble sentiment of our Shorter Catechism: "The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him."

He believed that in this infallible and authoritative Word of God he had found a form of government prescribed for the Church. Having found it there, it bound his conscience as absolutely and as imperiously controlled him in thought and actions as anything else he found there. With him it was not enough to say that the Church is "a divine institution." The State also is a divine institution. The State is an ordinance of God in the sense that men are so related to each other that government is a necessity; in the sense that men are so constituted that they are naturally drawn together to live in masses or communities and seek a form of government; in the sense that God has endowed man with sufficient reason and light of nature to construct a government for himself; and in the sense that a government so constructed becomes the ordinance of God to all who are subject to it which they are under obligation to obey, but not in the sense that any particular form of government has been prescribed by Him. But the Church, on the contrary, is a divine institution in exactly the sense in which the State is not, namely: that God has prescribed a particular form of government for it. Here again an important distinction must be made. In the Rochester Assembly, in 1860, in his debate with Dr. Hodge, Dr. Hodge agreed with him that the Church was a divine institution, but held that it was divine only in the sense that the general principles of Church government are given in the Scriptures, and not in the sense that a particular form of government is commanded there. Dr. Thornwell, in reply, made the distinction between "regulative principles" and "constitutive principles." In his view, what Dr. Hodge contended for was merely "regulative principles," which prescribe the end of Church government without prescribing the means or the particular constitution of the Church by which the end was to be reached. On the contrary, he himself saw in the Bible "constitutive principles" of Church government, which prescribed the exact structure of the govern-

ment, its officers, its courts and its laws. So that two formulas came to be distinctive of the two sides in the debate. Dr. Hodge maintained that whatever in the matters of Church government is not forbidden by the Scriptures is by implication permitted. Dr. Thornwell contended that whatever is not expressly commanded in the Scriptures is by implication forbidden. He believed that whatever is needful for Church government is either expressly set down in the Bible, or may be deduced from what is set down by good and necessary inference. He believed that the function of the Church is, as our Standards express it, "ministrative and declarative." It is declarative because the Church has no authority to originate truth, but only to declare what it finds in the Word of God. It is ministrative in the sense that it has no authority to make laws, but only to administer those laws it finds in the Word of God. He believed man incapable of constructing a wise government for the Church. "Man cannot be the counsellor of God," he would say. Hear some sentences of his own: "The Word of God uniformly represents man as blind and ignorant, incapable of seeing afar off, perverted in judgment, warped in understanding, seared in conscience and misguided in affections; and therefore requiring a heavenly teacher and a heavenly guide at every step of his progress. He has no light in himself in reference to divine things. He is a child, a fool, to be taught and led. Utterly unqualified by the narrowness of his faculties to foresee the future, he cannot even tell what is good for himself all the days of his vain life, which he spends as a shadow, and much less can he determine upon a large scale what is expedient for the Church of God. Surrounded by natural darkness, he has a light, most graciously bestowed, which penetrates the gloom—even the sure word of prophecy—and to this he is required to give heed." Referring to the Bible as a bulwark against foolish and ruinous innovations of man, he says: "To remove a single chink from the obstructions which bank up a mighty body of water is to prepare the way for the desolations of a flood. The only safe principle is the noble principle of Chillingworth, 'The Bible, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants.' When this great sun arises, all meaner lights retire, as the stars disappear before the dawning day." He trembled at the words of Christ, "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments

of men"; and such warnings of the Scriptures as that found on the last page of the sacred volume: "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." The Church is, therefore, not a voluntary organization, but a divine institution. It is voluntary only in the sense that man has the option of coming within the Church to the salvation of his soul, or remaining out of it to his everlasting undoing. When, in the exercise of this free choice he comes within the Church, that which he enters is a divine thing—divine in every fiber of its structure and in every movement of its life.

This principle is fundamental among us now. Our appeal is immediately to the Scriptures, and what we do not find there for us does not exist. It is an accepted principle, a settled question, and yet, in a large measure, it holds this place amongst us as a result of Dr. Thornwell's teaching. It was not accepted in the old Church. It was rejected by the Rochester Assembly by a large vote. How lightly we sometimes hold those principles for which the fathers risked so much! In defense of this truth, Dr. Thornwell entered the lists of debate with Dr. Charles Hodge, who was one of the most learned theologians of any age, who was intrenched in all the prestige that belongs to the Professor of Systematic Theology in the leading Tehological Seminary in the United States, and in the esteem of the large number of ministers who had been educated by him and many of whom were members of this Assembly.

3. As to the particular form of government which Dr. Thornwell believed to be revealed in the Scriptures, it should be of interest to all students of the Science of Government to know that it was the highest form of a representative republic. He was fond of quoting Milton's panegyric upon that form of government, that it was "held by the wisest men of all ages, the noblest, the manliest, the equalest, the justest government, the most agreeable to all due liberty and proportioned equality, both human and civil and Christian, most cherishing to virtue and true religion." But there are two interpretations of the representative republic. One is that it is a mere substitute for popular democracy. It is held

that because of the inconvenience of having the multitude assemble in one place to participate in the government, the representative is chosen to act for them. He is a mere delegate or deputy, empowered to do no more than execute the wishes of those who have chosen him and express their opinions. According to the other interpretation, the representative is selected for his individual capacity to deal with questions of government. He is not merely to record what his constitutents wish, but to confer with other representatives, to learn, to weigh, to deliberate, to decide and to act, not merely in accordance with the caprices of the masses, but in accordance with their best interests, as those interests are determined from his more advantageous point of observation. This is that splendid ideal of government expounded and acted upon by both Burke and Pitt at dramatic crises in their public careers. It is this latter ideal of government which Dr. Thornwell saw in the Scriptures, a government of elders or presbyters chosen by the people, chosen for their age and experience, or because they possessed those qualifications which are usually associated with age or are the result of experience. There is, however, this marked difference between this divinely given mode of government and its counterpart in the State. In the State, the representative rules for the benefit of the people in accordance with a humanly made constitution, which he interprets and applies by merely human reason and the light of nature. In the Church, the ruler rules by a divine constitution and is guided by divine laws interpreted for him by the Spirit of God. The function of the people is to elect the rulers and nothing more. Having been elected, the elder becomes the deputy of God, whose sole function is to learn and apply the law of God as that is revealed with sufficient fullness in the Bible. If that be the best human government in which the wisest and best men are selected to rule according to their best information and judgment, how vastly more splendid a thing is this God-given government in which the most godly and most discreet men are selected to rule by a divinely given and divinely interpreted law! Consider another aspect of this question. It is admitted on all sides that the strongest and most effective form of government would be the absolute monarchy, provided the monarch were wise and good. But seeing there can be no security for the wisdom and the character of the monarch, the repre-

sentative republic is the best form to secure the equilibrium of efficiency and human freedom. It is noteworthy that this Scriptural government provides for the advantages of both, while a republic in its human administration does not cease to be an absolute monarchy, inasmuch as it is the Kingdom of Christ.

So much for the general theory of it. As to its mechanism, there are two orders of officers: the deacons, to minister on the temporal side of the Church's life, and the ruling elders or presbyters, to rule. Of the presbyters there are two classes, those who rule only and those who also preach the Word, or "labor in the Word and doctrine," as well as rule. The preachers exercise their special function of preaching severally or as individuals, but the elders, whether preachers or not, exercise their function of rule jointly in courts called Presbyteries, because composed of presbyters. When the ministers and the ruling elders meet in the courts, they meet on a plane of absolute equality of authority. Each local congregation has its Presbytery, called for convenience the "Session," composed of the pastor and his associate ruling elders. Where there are a number of neighboring congregations, a higher Presbytery may be formed of representatives of the sessions and called specially by the name "Presbytery." When the area is enlarged, a number of Presbyteries may be formed, uniting in a still higher court, which is called a "Synod." A number of Synods unite in a higher court, called the "General Assembly." And thus the system is elastic and so susceptible of expansion as at length to embrace all the Christians in the world and illustrate the universality and unity of the Church.

Let us examine another aspect of the case. It has been found by reason and experience that the representative republic may be still further reinforced and strengthened if, instead of committing the whole authority to one body of legislators, there are two bodies, like our Senate and House of Representatives, of co-ordinate jurisdiction, whose members are elected on a different principle and have a different tenure of office. Dr. Thornwell found the counterpart of that in the Presbyterian system of the Scriptures. We do not have two separate and co-ordinate courts for the same territory, but we do have two classes of presbyters, those who rule only and those who also preach. Sitting in the same court and possessed of equal au-

thority, they are of two classes, with a different tenure of office and elected on a different principle, and so regard all questions from a somewhat different point of view.

Out of the promulgation of these views by Doctors Thornwell and Breckinridge and others grew a long controversy as to the nature of the office of ruling elder. Is the ruling elder the same as the presbyter spoken of in the Bible, or is the term presbyter confined to the minister of the Word? Is the presence of a ruling elder necessary to make a quorum in a Church court? Has the ruling elder a right to lay his hands on the head of a minister in ordination? To some it may seem a trivial question and one unworthy of the serious attention of great men, whether or not the elder may lay hands on a minister; but back of it lay questions that reach to the foundation of things: the question of what God meant by the office of presbyter; the question of the meaning of the ministry of the Word. Is it a governing caste, with exclusive privileges and a special official grace, or are the officers (the presbyters, including both preachers and ruling elders) mere ministers or servants, all alike representatives of the people and chosen by them; the question of the nature of ordination, Is it a charm or a magical rite by which an official character is imparted, or is it merely an act of government, a formality by which those already in office induct a new officer into office; the question of the place of the people in the Church, Are they merely the subjects of the Church, or do they compose the Church, whose ministers and servants the officers are? This subject also was included in the Rochester debate. Dr. Hodge contended that the elder was merely the delegate of the people to offset the power of what he called the "clergy"; that the elders being of a different order from the minister could not impose hands on a minister in ordination on the ground that they could not confer on others what they did not themselves possess. Dr. Thornwell charged that such views were prelatical and claimed that papacy itself was introduced into the Church by the gradual denial to the elders of the right to impose hands in ordination. Dr. Thornwell's views on this subject seem to us now as the simple primer of Church government. Few of us have ever known anything else; but there are brethren in this Synod who remember the controversy, and in other days heard the contention that an elder had no right to impose hands in the

ordination of a minister, because he could not impart to another what he did not possess himself.

4. For this Church, thus organized, he also found in the Word of God a specific vocation and a circumscribed sphere of action. The argument that the Church is a divine institution for the benefit of man, and that therefore the Church may embark in anything that is for the benefit of man, had no weight with him. The argument that the Church is a moral institution, and can do anything to advance morality, had no weight with him. The argument that the Church is spiritual, and may employ any innocent means it chooses for the accomplishment of spiritual results, did not weigh with him. In answer to the question, "What is the purpose of the Church, for what was it intended, and what may it do?" he repaired to his guiding principle, "The Bible, the Bibly only, is the religion of Protestants," and sought for light in the Scriptures. There he found that the Church is exclusively religious in its organization and its methods. The Church has four clearly defined duties: First, it is to preach the gospel of free salvation through the atonement of Christ: "The Spirit and the Bride say come." Second, it is to gather, educate and discipline believers: "The edifying of the body of Christ," the apostle declares, is one of the purposes of Church organization. Third, it is to be a witness for the truth; it is called "the pillar and ground of the truth." Fourth, it is to take order for the extension of the kingdom into all the world: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." To give merely secular education, to cultivate the merely natural virtues, to engage in a beneficence that terminates in physical, social and civic betterment, but does not seek the salvation of the soul from sin and ruin; these, nor one nor all of them, are within the sphere of the Church's mission. Touching them all, he would use the language of Christ, "Let the dead bury their dead." Hence we find him opposing all schemes for enlisting the Church in secular education. He opposed any direct alliance between the Church and temperance societies or other societies for mere moral reform. He likewise opposed making the Church ancillary to voluntary benevolent societies. Were he living in this day, he would, no doubt, be opposed to "social service" as a part of the Church's work, scientific sanitation, wholesome food, social purity, temperance, proper relations between capital and labor. He

would be opposed to the "institutional church," in which the Church is threatened to be strangled by the institutions. He would be opposed to "civic righteousness" as a part of the Church's work, the purifying of political methods, the enactment of better laws, the enforcement of existing laws. It was not that a man of his transcendent learning depreciated education, or that a man of his exalted sense of virtue and of the dignity of manhood was indifferent to sobriety and its kindred virtues; or that a man of his sympathetic nature failed to respond to human suffering. But what commission had the Church to teach the classics or the sciences or profane history? What commission had the Church to seek an improvement in morals only, leaving men dead in trespasses and in sins, healing the hurt a little, while it was empowered of Heaven to offer the renewal of the whole man after the image of Christ? Accordingly, in the Cincinnati Assembly, where he was a commanding influence, though not a member of the committee on slavery, he was consulted by that committee and prepared the report which it presented and which the Assembly adopted, and which fixed the attitude of the Church towards slavery for years to come. And in the Baltimore Assembly of 1848, in a report on temperance societies, speaking of the Church, he uses this language: "Its ends are holiness of life and the manifestation of the riches and glory of divine grace, and not simply morality, decency and good order, which may to some extent be secured without faith in a Redeemer, or the transforming efficiency of the Holy Spirit." And in the Indianapolis Assembly of 1859 occurred a most dramatic incident in this connection. Exhausted by his Assembly duties and by loss of sleep, he sat by his friend, Dr. Palmer, leaned his head upon his shoulder and fell asleep. A report was presented in which it was proposed that the Assembly formally give its countenance to a society for the colonization of Southern slaves in Africa. Dr. Palmer aroused him and told him what was pending and urged him to take the platform at once and speak, since he had given special study to the questions involved. He did so. To speak upon such short notice and under those trying physical conditions, to overcome the natural prejudice against a Southern man and a slave owner, to win confidence in his patriotism, to command an interest in the abstract principles in the case, to neutralize the political enthusiasm upon which the advocates of the report had counted, to

snatch complete victory from foregone defeat, to do all this in a brief speech and sit down amidst uncontrollable applause, was one of the most brilliant achievements ever witnessed in a deliberative Assembly.

But of all the questions of this character, tending to obscure the purely spiritual nature of the Church's mission and work, that which far exceeds all others in practical menace is the question of the relations of Church and State. The danger in this case is enhanced by a multitude of circumstances. No service of Dr. Thornwell's to the cause of the Church was more important than his elucidation of this intricate subject. To deal properly with such a subject, it was necessary not only to have a knowledge of Church law, but also of the nature and history of civil government. In this respect Dr. Thornwell was fully qualified to cope with the question. Mr. Calhoun said of him, after his first interview: "I was not prepared for the thorough acquaintance he exhibited with all the topics that are generally familiar only to statesmen." Chancellor Job Johnston said of his article on the state of the country: "I took up the article with trepidation, fearing that a divine would make a muddle of the question, but I found it a model state paper." He held to the absolute severance of Church and State—the pure spirituality of the one, the distinct secularity of the other.

The occasion which led to Dr. Thornwell's greatest activity in this connection was the breaking out of the War Between the States. When the General Assembly met in Philadelphia in 1861 Fort Sumter had just fallen. The heart of the North was inflamed. One church body after another had proven a victim. It had been hoped that the doors of the Presbyterian Assembly would be barred against political passion. Excitement throughout the country was volcanic. The increase of the excitement within the Assembly itself could be measured from day to day. Telegraphic communication was kept up between members of the Assembly and members of the President's cabinet touching the kind of deliverance the Assembly should make. The Assembly became a boiling caldron of passionate political debate, from which issued the declaration that the Assembly was "under obligation to promote and perpetuate the integrity of the United States and to strengthen, uphold and encourage the central government." There was no question as to the duty of a citizen to

be loyal to the existing government. It was a question whether the loyalty of a citizen in a seceding State was due first to the state government or to the central government. It was this purely political question which the Assembly decided. Dr. Hodge and a number of associates entered a protest on the grounds that the paper adopted by the Assembly does decide a political question "and that the Assembly in deciding this question made a political opinion a condition of communion in the Christian Church." Dr. Thornwell was not a member of that Assembly, but he and others were indefatigable in their efforts, by correspondence and otherwise, to effect the union of the seceding Presbyteries into a General Assembly of the Confederate States. His hopes were realized, and the first General Assembly of the Confederate States convened in Augusta, Georgia, December 4th, 1861. He was a towering figure in that body. His most important service was the preparation for the Assembly of an "Address to All the Churches of Jesus Christ Throughout the Earth," a defense of our Church in its separation from the old Church, as noble a specimen of ecclesiastical composition as the literature of all the ages can afford. Dr. Palmer says of it: "It was pervaded with a sacramental fervor which stamped upon it the impression of a sacred and binding covenant." In his discussion of the relation of Church and State, in that address, occurs this sentence: "They (Church and State) are as planets moving in different orbits, and unless each is confined to its own track, the consequences may be as disastrous in the moral world as a collision of different spheres in the world of matter."*

Before passing from this subject, let me further say that whilst Dr. Thornwell believed that the Church had a specific vocation and a circumscribed sphere of action, he also believed that the effect of its work was generic, and that it was felt in every department of human thought, experience and effort. The object of the Church is to secure the regeneration and sanctification of man—to quicken his conscience, to reinforce his will. Place a man thus restored by divine grace amidst the responsibilities of

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*At this point the Rev. Dr. T. H. Law, the Stated Clerk of Synod, who is also Stated Clerk of the Assembly, held up to the view of the congregation the original manuscript of the address here referred to, with the signature of every member of the Assembly affixed to it.

life, and under all circumstances he will act as a Christian should act. If he has children, he will educate them. If he sees human depravity and suffering, he will reclaim the depraved and relieve the suffering. Give him political power of any sort, whether on the hustings, at the polls, in halls of legislation, under the judicial ermine, or in the executive chair, and he will use that power out of conscience towards God. Thus, while the Church must confine herself to the one work of the salvation of souls, souls cannot be saved without leaving a generic impression upon the face of all society.

5. For the work to which the Church is called, Dr. Thornwell found that it was sufficient. It has sufficient organization, sufficient authority and sufficient power. The Church does not need that voluntary societies, without or within the Church, should come to its assistance to supply any supposed deficiencies in its organization. The Church itself has no authority and has no need to devise agencies of her own in addition to those expressly given in the Scriptures or necessarily growing out of those so given. She may not delegate her authority to any other body, or transfer her responsibility. Hence the bitter controversy concerning "Boards" as a means of conducting the work of the Church. Prior to the disruption in 1837, Home and Foreign Missions and other Church work were conducted by voluntary organizations, outside of the jurisdiction of the Church, called "Boards." Dr. Thornwell perfectly agreed with Dr. Breckinridge and other leaders in the Church that these "Boards" usurped the functions of the Church. It is the mission of the Church to evangelize the world. The Chuch is a missionary society; every member of the Church is a member of a missionary society. On joining this missionary society, by the very act of joining, one is committed to the doing of something for the spread of the gospel. The Church with such a membership, with its equipment of officers and courts, with its authority, with the Spirit of God dwelling within her, is competent to do whatever is necessary for carrying the gospel to every creature in the world. Therefore, the seizing of this work by a voluntary society is unnecessary and a usurpation. Believing in these views, Dr. Thornwell soon became a recognized leader of the opposition to "Boards." Even after the disruption, the old school Assembly did not wholly emancipate itself from the former means

of doing Church work. Instead of the Church's assuming complete control of all its proper work after the separation, it adopted a new kind of Boards in lieu of the old denominational Boards, Presbyterian Boards instead of non-sectarian Boards. These Boards were brought nearer to the Church by being composed of Presbyterians, by propagating a Presbyterian gospel, by having members of the Board elected by the Assembly and by having annual reports made to the Assembly. Dr. Thornwell antagonized these new Boards on several grounds. He held that they were too large and unwieldy, their membership being scattered over the whole territory of the Church, so that only a few members could attend the meetings. Those few members who attended and controlled the business became autocratic and defied the authority of the Assembly. The Boards became, as he expressed it, not "organs" of the Church as they should be, but independent and competing "organisms." He also violently opposed a custom that had grown up in connection with the Boards, of conferring honorary life memberships upon persons who contributed given amounts for their work. He did not hesitate to describe this as a selling of ecclesiastical honors, and did not shrink from calling it "Simony." He believed that the true principle upon which money should be given for Church work is that of the expression of worship towards God. In the Rochester Assembly he contended for radical changes in the system. This it was that brought on the great debate with Dr. Hodge in that Assembly—a debate which, as we have seen, took a wide range into a number of related subjects. In the heat of debate, Dr. Hodge declared that Dr. Thornwell's views were "hyper—hyper—hyper—high-church Presbyterianism!" which caused Dr. Thornwell to reply that the views of Dr. Hodge were "no—no—no Presbyterianism, no—no—no Churchism!"—"a touch of democracy and a touch of prelacy, a large slice of Quakerism, but no Presbyterianism."

Dr. Thornwell's views were rejected by a large vote. He then offered a protest, but subsequently a paper was adopted by the Assembly conceding so much of what he had contended for that he withdrew his protest. Applause greeted this generous act. One who is ignorant of the history of the Rochester Assembly and who merely compares accounts of the modern operation of Northern Boards and Southern Committees is led to think that

there is not enough difference between the debaters to justify so great a debate, and that the chief difference is in the name. Dr. Thornwell strongly maintained that he cared nothing for a name; it was the principle he sought. It was because the Rochester Assembly finally modified the Boards in accordance with his views that the operations of those Boards became more like those of our Committees. And so Dr. Thornwell has left an indelible mark upon the operations of the Northern Church itself. But that a radical difference between Boards and Committees still remained is shown by the definitions of the two published by Dr. Hodge himself in 1882. Of the Board he says that it "has full powers to transact all the business of the missionary cause, only requiring the Board to report annually to the General Assembly." Of the Committee he says it "is bound in all cases to act according to the instruction of the Assembly." At the organization of the Southern Church eighteen months later, Dr. Thornwell's views were adopted throughout. The work of the Church was placed in charge of small Committees, whose members were to live close to the central office of administration and whose officers were to be chosen by the Assembly itself. The Committees were to make annual reports to the Assembly. These reports were to be carefully digested, and the Assembly was thus to control directly its own work. Simplicity of organization and directness of control by the divinely appointed Church courts are the distinct characteristics of the new plan. How far the last Assembly at Bristol, Tennessee, may have departed from this ideal in permitting the Committees to elect any of their own executive officers, and what the significance and results of the change may be, are questions worthy of our serious consideration. The men selected by these Committees are my personal friends. I greatly admire them and staunchly support them, but no personal consideration can obscure the fact that the Assembly has changed its method of conducting the Church's work, and the new method is a hybrid between the views of Dr. Thornwell and those of Dr. Hodge.

Another incident at the Augusta Assembly greatly rejoiced Dr. Thornwell. Judge Shepherd, of North Carolina, chairman of a committee of distinguished elders to report a charter for the Church, recommended the appointment of a Board of Trustees, of which the various Committees of Church work were to be branches, the Board to receive for the Committees and

transfer to them all gifts, conveyances, transfers of estate and legacies. The object of this plan was to prevent the accumulation of power in the various Committees, such as had existed in the old Church, and to concentrate the power in the hands of a single board immediately under the Assembly's control. Judge Shepherd was subjected to a spirited cross-fire of questions from all over the house, till at length Chancellor Job Johnston, of South Carolina, remarked: "I think the Judge has passed a good examination, and I hope he will be allowed to retire." To this Dr. Thornwell replied, with a glow of animation suffusing his face: "To me this is a most delightful paper. I can find nothing in it to be objected to, and I move therefore that it be received." Dr. Palmer says, with reference to the incident: "It was a scene of dramatic interest the exact parallel with which we never had witnessed in a Church court."

6. He believed that when the courts act within their authority, that authority is divine and is binding on the consciences of those who are subject to these courts. In 1845 he accepted a call to the pastorate of the Second Church of Baltimore, and the Presbytery of Charleston granted him a letter of dismission to the Baltimore Presbytery. There occurred a delay in his presenting that letter, and circumstances changed. The Presbytery of Charleston recalled the letter of dismission. Dr. Palmer says of this act of the Presbytery: "It is the strongest illustration of Presbyterial power of which the writer is aware." But he at once acquiesced, believing that Presbytery had divine authority to control his movements. When Dr. Palmer was called from the Seminary to the First Church of New Orleans, and the question came before the Synod of South Carolina, many urged that the Synod ought to be governed by Dr. Palmer's own convictions of duty. But Dr. Thornwell strongly contended that it was the duty of the Synod to decide this question regardless of Dr. Palmer's personal convictions. Dr. Palmer himself agreed with that construction of the law.

7. His entire theory of the Church has found formal expression in a monumental book—*The Book of Church Order.* He was chairman of a committee of the old Assembly to recast the Rules of Discipline and had presented a draft of the new rules. The Assembly, however, did not act upon the report before the division of the Church. The Southern Assembly, in December,

1861, appointed him on a similar committee to revise the *Rules of Discipline* and also to revise the *Form of Government.* Dr. Thornwell died within eight months. Dr. John B. Adger, his associate and successor, intended to write a history of the preparation of our *Book of Church Order.* He died, however, without carrying that purpose into effect. No one else could now write its history. It is well assured that the *Rules of Discipline* were recast again before being presented to the Southern Church. Whether Dr. Thornwell did any work upon that book or any on the *Form of Government* is not known. The members of the committee, however, were in hearty sympathy with him in all his views of Church government, and whilst he may not have prepared the *Book on Church Order,* it unquestionably expresses his views and is in a large measure the result of his work and influence. Concerning that book, the Chicago *Interior* declared that "in its style it is worthy to be the companion of the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms." The Presbyterian *Banner* said of it: "It is Presbyterianism of the highest and purest kind." Dr. West, a Northern Presbyterian minister of great experience and distinction as an ecclesiologist, says: "It is superior in every way to any Presbyterian manual of discipline I have ever seen."

Fathers and Brethren, my task draws to its close. I do not discuss dead issues nor engage in useless debate of questions forever settled. It would not be worth your while nor mine merely to celebrate the glories of the past or the deeds of a hero. These conflicts which engaged Dr. Thornwell's great gifts will ever call for the loyal and courageous support of those who love the Kingdom of Christ. So long as there is ecclesiastical ambition, so long as there is pride of human inventions, so long as there is hostility to God and resentment of authority in religion, so long as Satan is active in the Church of God, just so long will these same questions be encountered and must we dare and endure for Christ's crown and covenant. Dr. Thornwell's genius showed itself quite as much in the amazing power with which he aroused the Church to a sense of the importance of these things and to decisive action upon them as in the masterly manner in which he wrought out his system. Dr. Conrad Speece tells this story of Patrick Henry. He was once employed in a murder trial in the city of Richmond. It was quite late at night when

he rose to make his speech. The house was still thronged with people who were waiting for his time to speak, though many of them had fallen asleep. He began by apologizing for speaking at that late hour and said he would not think of detaining them longer if it were not for the fact that in this case human blood was concerned. He pronounced the four words, "human blood is concerned," in such a manner that the whole audience was instantly aroused and thrilled. They listened to him with rapt attention as long as he chose to speak. What was it that had so startling an effect upon that sleeping audience? Had the orator's tones imparted to human blood a value it had not possessed before? No, he had simply awakened them to a sense of the value it always has, even when men are indifferent and asleep. In the same way the eloquence of Dr. Thornwell aroused a dormant Church to an appreciation of the importance that always invests these questions, and that no torpor on our part can diminish.

How many and how powerful are the motives which inspire us to be faithful! It has been remarked by historians that Presbyterian Church government had a controlling influence in determining the form of government for the United States. If that be true, how important it is, even to secular government, that we should somewhere preserve that model in its purity, against the days when the Ship of State will encounter every species of tempest, of every degree of violence and danger! If this Church government be divine, it is indestructible. It may be obscured and smothered by human inventions in one place, but somewhere in the extensive Kingdom of Christ it will reappear, in Korea, in China, or it may even be in Africa. Let us beware lest, proving unfaithful, the Kingdom be taken from us and given to another nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

And now once more let us turn and get a last view of Dr. Thornwell's life as a whole. With what reverence did he view the Church as the work of Jehovah! How dare a sinful man change such an ordinance of God even in the smallest particular! How dare a man, however holy might be the office he fills, put forth his hand to touch the Ark of God, however great might seem its danger! And who is it that thus bows so reverently in the presence of the Most High? He is a youth who, by his own efforts and without the aid of adventitous circumstances, achieves

the highest literary, social and ecclesiastical distinction. He is conscious of powers that rank him with the greatest intellects of history. See this imperial youth standing at the entrance of life, with vaulting pride, unabashed before the throne of God, gazing defiance into the face of Diety, gnashing his teeth, raising his hand aloft and crying, "I shall be damned, but I will demonstrate to the assembled universe that I am not to blame." See him again when he has heard the voice of God, and his heart is touched and subdued, prostrate before God, always asking, like Saul of Tarsus, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

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